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ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL TAIT

In an article published in this periodical last April the writer referred to the change of opinion upon many of those parts of the "faith" which had for centuries been deemed unchangeable, and in illustration cited the election to the See of Canterbury in 1896 of one who would, by a majority of the bishops fifty years earlier, have been deemed heretical. What is more fascinating than the philosophy of change! Or, as we might put it, the wherefore of history—for "history" and "change" are synonymous. Change, "the all-painful and yet all-needful product," as Carlyle says, "of increased resources which the old methods can no longer administer; of new wealth which the old coffers will no longer contain." He who studies the history of the nineteenth century, whether it be to examine its ecclesiastical or economic or scientific phases, must, if he would make any pretense at an understanding of his subject, possess a philosophy of change. For no century—it is a trite remark—can begin to compete with the nineteenth in the number of its mental and moral and metaphysical revolutions.

But it is upon the changes in the religious beliefs of men that we wish to lay a special emphasis here. Unnecessary though it may be to give any catalogue of such occurrences, it might make our point clearer if we called attention to one or two. Take the historical statements in the Old Testament. Fifty years ago it was the usual thing for men to accept them in preference to the demonstrated laws of science. The writer remembers but a short

while ago hearing one of the old school assert that if the Good Book asseverated that the sun did stand still above the hill of Gibeon, then it was certain that science erred in asseverating that the sun could not stand still. Commonplace, though this is, we hardly realize in what high quarters such opinions were held fifty years ago. We might fairly say that it represents the attitude of both the high and dry parties of the Church about 1860. One who is regarded as an upholder of the orthodox position to-day wrote in 1891 an essay (all know it) in which he says of the earlier narratives in Genesis, that they may "quite represent all the nature of myth;" furthermore, he admits that the three successive codes attributed to Moses may date from widely separated periods. Jonah and Daniel may be "dramatic compositions worked up on a basis of history." The Book of Chronicles may be unhistorical so long as we do not think it is a conscious perversion of history; while, so far as the historical reality of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is concerned, the language of the writer does not commit him to maintaining it as *de fide*.

Such opinions as these, expressed by a man like Gore, are of more revolutionary significance than generally realized. Pusey was of course paralyzed by them; but none the less, his disciples gave glad allegiance to one who said, "I had long felt a necessity of looking inward, not outward; of putting conscience above guidance; of valuing a revelation only so far as it is confirmed within." Words, these, which suggest to one the latitudinarianism of the "new theology" promoter. Again, to take a less familiar example, the changes which have taken place in opinions about education exhibit an astonishing development. Read those delightful essays by Burgon upon his twelve good friends, or read the explosions of Hurrell Froude, or Ward, or read the pious doubts of Rose and Sumner of Winchester; read any of these, and you will get the extreme, yet logical, opinion of their days that clerks in Holy Orders were alone fit instructors for the youth—a theory which prevails to this day upon the Continent, if we are to judge by the priest-led chaingangs of young aristocrats whom we see parading the cities of Europe. Such was the common theory of 1850, though many dissenters were there. Now recall the University Reform Bill of 1854 and the

education bills which have been passed by enlightened parliaments since that date; add to this the general acquiescence and approval with which these changes have been met; and still more, the fact that the energetic Bishop of Birmingham is at this good time giving a good part of his energies to the further reform of the universities; put all these things together and the educational changes which have occurred in the last fifty years will loom large. Now whether our philosophy of change is like that of Lecky, or of the more modern and materialistic Benn,¹ it matters not, save for our own satisfaction. The facts remain: the old order has given way to new; new norms and new forms dominate.

In studying the history of the Church of England during the last fifty years and in telling of the changes through which it has gone (such, for example, as those to which we have referred in our prelude), there is no name of equal importance to that of Archibald Campbell Tait, and it is the purpose of this paper to exhibit him as the bridge by means of which the flood was crossed—the mediator between the old learning and the new; the arbitrator between the opinions of the fifties and the nineties; the transducer and translator of the Church in that epoch of change. Not, we are bound to admit, that he was the great man of the epoch, or that he was even one of the intellectual leaders of the time. Neither of these distinctions do we claim for him; but, as is often the case, it is out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, of the men of mediocre ability, of more intensity than extensity, that strength is ordained and that changes of perennial importance are brought to pass. It is to Tait in this light that I would ask you to turn your attention.

To tell the story of the life of the famous Archbishop would be as large a task almost as to tell the history of the English Church during twenty-five years: for from the time when, as a Fellow of Balliol, he took a leading part in the protest against Tract XC, down until the day of his death, there was hardly any movement of importance with which he did not have something

¹ "History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century," by A. W. Benn, Longman's, 1906.

to do. And yet we must, if we would make our point, tell of his participation in the larger events of those days.

To begin with the first, which was perhaps the most spectacular event of his life—the protest of the Tutors against the rank illegality of Tract XC. The facts of the case are in brief: that bond-servant to the æsthetic side of religion, Newman, after months of pandering to the pandemonium of Rome, which had been tolerated only because of the irreproachable life of the man, published on the twenty-seventh of February, 1841, his notorious piece of theological prestidigitation, entitled Tract XC. Of its slippery logic and evasions we need say nothing other than to remind the reader that it was an attempt to saddle upon the Church of England all of the Tridentine Doctrines. Many people vociferated loudly against this betrayal of trust, but it was Tait who took the Papal bull by the horns and in co-operation with Churton, Wilson and Griffiths, wrote the letter to the editor of the "Tracts for the Times," which was the immediate cause of the suppression of that series of Newmanistics, as well as the driving of the Tract party from the Church. It is not generally realized that all but about three lines of this letter were of Tait's composition. Those who were on the inside of things taunted him to the end of his life with having "hounded Newman out of Oxford." Now, though it took no large ability or unusual energy to launch this protest, and though it might have been done equally well by any other Oxonian, the fact of the matter is, however, that it was Tait who was the leader in this affair in the movements of the day of which we spoke; a leadership evidencing and necessitating no great ability, but leadership which continued until the end of his life.

Not long after this event and shortly after the deeply lamented death of Arnold, Tait was elected to the Headmastership of Rugby. Perhaps, if there is anything really big in a man, it can be brought out by the headmastership of a big boys' school. Did not Rugby make Arnold and Temple? Now Rugby did not make Tait for the simple reason that there was no latent immensity in his nature to be brought out. To tell the truth, Tait was not a wonderful success at Rugby, and the desperate illness which overtook him in 1849 and compelled him to retire to the less exacting

position of the Deanship of Carlisle, was a change as advantageous to the school as to the Headmaster. This illness was the first deep stirring incident in his life, a life more than ordinarily punctuated by diastoles and systoles of joy and sorrow. Although we must admit that it is in moments of calm and peace that the real warrior is made, yet for Tait these times of war were so severe that any appreciation of his character would be incomplete without mention of them. While we have been speaking lightly of the ability of our hero, we have not for one moment been referring to any but the strength, which is weakness with God; for of the weakness which is strength with God, the weakness of holiness, the weakness of Godlikeness, of these invincible weaknesses he was abundantly possessed; and with them he went on from strength to strength conquering in the end all the obstacles that were before him. We know of no devotional book more helpful than are passages from his diary. At times they rise to the heights of the *Imitatio Christi*; and there never was a man who lived in closer communion with his Maker than Archibald Tait.² It was through the influence of the various crises through which he had to pass that he was led to this supreme height of spirituality.

The second of these crises, and the most horrible, came within seven years after leaving Rugby and, curious to say, played a similar part in his ecclesiastical career to that played by the Rugby illness which brought about his advance to the Deanery of Carlisle; it was the Carlisle tragedy that brought about his preferment to the See of London. In all the annals of the English Church there is nothing more sad than the story of the scarlet fever epidemic at Carlisle in 1856; how, in the space of a few weeks, child after child succumbed to its fury, until, of the six little daughters whose lives had brought happiness to the Deanery, only one was left. Davidson truly says, "Is it wonderful that when the parents came forth from that awful cloud of those spring days their life was lived henceforward under wholly new conditions, and that through all the checkered and busy years that followed they carried consciously upon them the consecra-

² Davidson's "Life of Tait," Vol. I, pages 134, 136 and 137, and *passim*.

tion of the holy sorrow they had known?" Tait's own diary at this time contains so exquisite a chapter that we would that we had time to quote it at large as an example of the irrefragable faith of the man.

While occupying the Carlisle Deanery we notice the first signs of Tait's great aptitude for executive work, which, added to his depth of determination, gives us the sum total of his capabilities as well as his title to the Archbishopric. Deaneries had hitherto been regarded as sinecures; as positions especially adapted for the veterans and wounded ones, who, after fighting a good fight, might while away the rest of their days in calm desuetude. But Tait changed all this and injected a new spirit and created a new precedent which has greatly bettered the Carlisle Cathedral work ever since.

It was in the second year of his occupancy of the Deanery that he played a prominent part in the second of the epoch-marking events with which he was connected: the reform of the educational system at Oxford. We hear so much these days of a demand on the part of thinking Liberals for the dissolution of the Oxford and Cambridge aristocracies and for further improvements in the University curricula, that it is interesting to note the commencement of this movement. One Mr. Haywood, a radical member from Lancaster, had endeavored to get through the House of Commons a resolution for the changing of the English university system. Though he failed, Lord John Russell and his government promised that a Royal Commission should be appointed to examine into the matter. Loud were the denunciations of the Heads of Houses. Protests and pamphlets were circulated widely and even the secular papers joined in the academic outbursts. Better a thousand times, said they all, "that decency and custom should starve the truth," than that one jot or tittle of the old laws should be done away with. But the exhortations of the obscurantists in no way terrified the doughty Lord John, and he proceeded apace. A commission was appointed and despite the obloquy which it would evidently bring upon him, Tait accepted Lord John's invitation to become a member of it. Among his fellow members it is interesting to note Goldwin Smith, Arthur Stanley and Baden-Powell. Just how prominent

a part Tait played on this commission we are unable to ascertain, but knowing his interest in the work and his conviction as to its necessity, we cannot but believe that it was an influential one. However, what we want to bring out is that he was one of the commissioners who brought it about that the doors of Oxford and Cambridge were thrown more widely open; that professorships were established; that the hitherto harmful exclusiveness of the colleges was lessened; and that many minor improvements were made. Think, then, of Tait as one of the original University reformers — it is a title to fame as well as to boldness.

Probably, as we have been so bold to aver, it was the wave of sympathy and pity for the afflicted dean which swept all over England and penetrated into the inmost recesses of the Royal Household which influenced his advancement to the See of London in 1856. It is with the commencement of his London work that he begins to mould the mind of the English Church at large, or rather so to act that precedents were established which transformed and rejuvenated it.

Blomfield, his predecessor, had been an admirable diocesan, a man of keen intellect and, for his day and generation, an energetic organizer. How largely have the executive activities of bishops altered to suit the similar alterations in the business world! For twenty-eight years Blomfield had stood out so largely in the life of the metropolis that it was well nigh impossible to associate with the title, "Bishop of London," any other but him. He was the Bishop of London for fifty years, colloquially speaking. It seemed an overheavy task for any man to become his successor.³

In order lightly to gauge Tait's episcopal work, one must clearly understand the conditions and divisions of the moment. The torrid heat of the forties had passed, but there remained a deep cleavage in the ranks of the clergy. The divisions, sadly so well known to-day between High and Low, had just about that time crystallized and become a working hypothesis. On the one hand was the school of Keble and Pusey, Denison, Hook and Carter,

³ It is interesting to remember that the occasion of Tait's accession was upon the resignation of Blomfield, and that this resignation was the first that had ever occurred in the English Church.

not to mention Wilberforce and his compeers; on the other hand were the evangelicals represented by the vast bulk of the clergy from the Tweed to the Solent; and lastly, was the New Broad party, rich in the leadership of such men as Stanley and Maurice. These lines, though not as yet delineated with any precision, did none the less exist in reality, and their significance was trebled by the unusual happenings of the moment.

The Broad Church followers were yet mourning the loss of Arnold, albeit they had reacted somewhat from the extremities to which that seer had been pushed by the excesses of the Tractarian party. Though breadth had existed these many years, yet the present Broad party found its origin in this phase of the Church of England's life. Without doubt, in 1855, they were the best hated Churchmen in England; in fact we might moralize and say that if toleration had been abundant there never would have been any Broad Church party. For there is no *raison d'être* for a Broad Church party; *per se*, the idea is anomalous, but it came into being as a result of outside pressure and unpopularity. So we can say with truth that if all had been tolerant such a party would never have come into existence.

As to the disciples of Pusey, the defections and the vagaries of Newman and Ward and Oakley and Manning had caused them to be feared even more than the members of the Broad party,⁴ and hence had united them in a closer bond. Since the fifties, there has been no group of men so closely held together as the High Churchmen. Of all parties, theirs is the most partisan, and the cause of this has been outside pressure quite as much as inside conviction.

Lastly, there was the Low group. They were the only section which had not changed since before the days of "The Revival," which had not been affected in one way or another by the ecclesiastical disturbances; and hence they had been driven into no close corporation. It is a great pity that these later days have seen a segregation into a party of this group; for there is, and probably never will be, no logical necessity for a Low Church party.

⁴ Cf. Burgon's "Life of Rose."

Such then were the conditions which surrounded Tait on his entrance upon the greatest of all Episcopal offices. A time of beginnings it was, of incipient party squabbles, of newly defined party divisions, and each difference and division doubled in intensity just because of its newness and incipiency. If Tait's position was a difficult one, yet even more it was an important one; for the moment was one when every act struck deep into the development of the Church of England. It is because of the tenseness and fecundity of this moment that the new Bishop of London's appointment was awaited with fear and trembling by the faithful of the various schools. Wilberforce, the irrepresible (so we are led to think from a remark in one of his letters) expected the appointment; and it would enlighten the situation if we would pause for a moment to consider what would have been the result of his preferment thereto.

Remember the weight carried with any act of the Bishop of London, and consider further the events during Tait's occupancy of that Cathedra, and it will be easy to see that the turbulence would have been seriously aggravated had a man of Wilberforce's wilfulness been in that position. As a matter of fact, on the other hand, it would have been equally dangerous had the new bishop been a man of the Stanley type; and lastly the Church could have ill afforded an extreme evangelical at this moment. Of course, historical "ifs" do not possess much virtue. Our hindsight compels us to think that the way in which things have developed was the only way. We are all moulded as to our theories and translations of history by the exigencies of the hour. And so when we now say that Tait was the man for the moment we mean no more than to say that he was the special vessel of grace by which the present new conditions evolved out of the past. And it is because we feel sure that the present tendencies are the true ones that we have no hesitancy in asserting that Tait was the man of the hour.

Having surveyed the conditions of the moment and its big possibilities, let us next turn to Tait's handling of the situation. The story of the publication of "Essays and Reviews," as the most perplexing of the difficulties with which he had to deal and the most representative of the controversies of the hour, will give

us an excellent example of his position and policy. But in order to assure an understanding of the matter, we must give a short survey of the event.⁵

Dr. Percival, later Bishop of Hereford and Assistant Master at Rugby in 1861, tells us that in February of that year, Temple summoned a meeting of his masters to explain to them his part in the "Essays and Reviews" affair. Assuming that the reader is conversant with the surface facts in regard to the publication of this book, I shall merely quote from Temple's *Memoirs* his own explanation of his participation in its publication, in order to get at the facts which were below the surface: "I have called this meeting for the purpose of saying a few words on the subject of 'Essays and Reviews'. . . . First, I must tell you that the book owes its origin to some conversations between Mr. Jowett and myself, as far back as eight or nine years ago, on the great amount of reticence in every class of society in regard to religious views. . . . We thought that it might encourage free and honest discussion of Biblical topics if we were to combine with some others to publish a volume of essays; and this idea gradually worked itself up into the present reality. . . . There was one stipulation made, namely that nothing should be written that was inconsistent with the position of ministers in our Church. I think that I ought to tell you that I saw none of the essays except my own, until I saw them in the book itself; and I believe that the other writers were equally ignorant of what was written by any but themselves, with the exception of one who acted as editor, but had no control over what was written."

We feel it is nothing but fair to Tait to give this statement of Temple's share in the work, in order that his attitude, which we shall presently develop, may be seen to have been perfectly just. Since the science of Biblical criticism had not as yet emerged from the studies of the specialists into the market-places of the half-informed, this book, filled as it was with the statement subversive of the old fashioned obscurantism, created an alarm of an in-

⁵ *Memoirs of Archibald Temple and the Lives of Wilberforce, Stanley and Tait.*

tensity that we of to-day can hardly realize. The very men who hooted at the ritualists at St. George's-in-the-East, howled with equal vociferousness at the men who dared suggest the perhaps that the Himalayas were not all submerged in the days of Noah.

In February, 1860, it was that the volume came out, but it first acquired notoriety by its being denounced by Wilberforce in October. By the opening of 1861 it had become a *cause célèbre*, and all England, ecclesiastical, was clanging with the controversy as to whether men who held such opinions could honestly retain their benefices. Wilberforce, in the *Quarterly* for January, maintained that they could not, while the opposite point of view was thundered forth by Stanley, in the *Edinburgh* for April. Tait's friendship for Temple, beginning in the days when he had tutored him in philosophy and logic at Balliol, was one of the strongest in his life. And when the controversy began to get fierce, and Temple's name was associated along with those of Williams and Baden-Powell without any allowance being made for the difference between the entire reverence of the essay of Temple and the flippancy of those of the two latter, he had to begin to cast in his mind to see just what attitude London should adopt in this matter. The first conclusion to which he came was that Temple's and Jowett's essays should be dissociated from the others—a position which a large majority of his brethren on the Episcopal bench refused to adopt, but which, as we saw from the opening explanation of Temple to his masters, was the only just position.

Early in February the bishops, in answer to a flood of petitions, met at Lambeth to consider the matter. Their action came in the form of a reply to a Dorset petition in which it had been besought that the bishops be convinced "that each deacon, who in reply to the question, 'Do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical scripture of the Old and New Testament?' answers, 'I do believe them,' speaks the truth in the sight of God." Sumner, as Archbishop, replied that he and twenty-five bishops with him were pained by the publication alluded to, and that they did not see "how these opinions can be held consistently with an honest subscription to the formularies of our Church."

Now for Tait's part in this pronunciamiento. The proceedings had been secret and we have no official knowledge of the course of events (even though the life of Wilberforce makes many breaches of confidence and puts before us the bishop's memoranda, yet they are not authoritative); but this much we do know, that before this Episcopal tirade was agreed to, Tait fought hard for the principle that Temple's and Jowett's essays should be differentiated from the others and that therefore the book should not be condemned as a whole. However, he was alone in his opinion, and though he may have somewhat modified the bishops' letter, yet it did none the less condemn the book as a whole. We have an interesting side-light on his character here. He was in a dilemma. If he refused to sign along with the other bishops, he would seem to approve of Wilson's extravagancies; if he signed, he would offend Temple and Jowett. He chose the latter alternative, we are sorry to say—an act which persuades us in persisting that he was not a really great man.

Deep was the wrath of Stanley and Temple and wide was the rent in their friendship. However, we have no time to tell of the long correspondence between them, but must take up what is of vital importance, Tait's attitude in Convocation. Here the matter was subsequently brought up in the form of a motion for the wholesale condemnation of the book. Oxford vituperated as usual over it, but Tait faced the entire House almost single handed, maintaining the orthodoxy of the essays of Temple and Jowett and Pattison, and further asserted that he did not for a moment "doubt the honesty" of those writers, who, however extreme their writings might be, "should still be separated therefrom and regarded as personalities." Vilifications were hurled at him for his speech. He was openly accused of "having compromised the truth he was appointed to maintain;" of having "linked himself without shame with the heresiarchs of the Church;" of having sold his soul for the sake of friends. So far, the Lower House of Convocation had only concurred with the bishops' letter; but it was now proposed by the bishops to appoint a committee in the Lower House to examine the book and see if there were grounds for synodical judgment upon it.

Again Tait showed himself to be a champion of quietness and confidence, and fought for inaction, deprecating nervous or faithless irritability.

But the great moment came when Williams and Wilson, two of the essayists, having been prosecuted and condemned by the Dean of the Arches, appealed to the Queen in Council. The judges on this bench numbered seven, three of whom were clerical, the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London. Now, if ever, Tait had a chance to show himself. There is no question that had he been a man who feared unpopularity more than he loved justice and liberality, his action in this matter would have been other than it was. There is, further, no question that it was due to the supreme breadth of the man that Williams and Wilson received justice. For the assent of the Bishop of London to the Lay members' decision of the matter added a gravity and weight to the judgment which it would otherwise have entirely lacked. The charge was that the essayists had denied the inspiration of the Scriptures; and in their judgment the committee declared that, being bound to specific passages in the charges, they could not pronounce on the whole essay, and that, so far as the specific passages were concerned, they could not uphold the Dean of the Arches, but gave judgment in favor of the Appellants. In regard to the further charge against Wilson, that he denied eternal punishment, Tait joined the Lay judges and differed from the Archbishops in declaring, that "we can not find in the formularies . . . any distinct declaration of our Church upon the subject so as to require us to condemn the expression of a hope by a clergyman that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked may be consistent with the will of God." Tait's participation in this decision was one of the most momentous acts in his life. His agreeing with the Lay judges in opposition to the two Archbishops in the "soul destroying" judgment (as the perfervid Pusey termed it), called down upon his head the combined wrath of the High and Low parties, and, although we have in another connection said that Tait was not of large calibre, yet his bravery in this matter was most extraordinary. To dare thus to acquit men, by holding to the exact legal aspect of the case, rather than to be carried away

by religious predilection into judging the matter from an extra-legal point of view, was an act entitling him to a high place in the hierarchy of just men. His disagreement with Williams and Wilson was deep, but he was too broad a man to let that affect him in his capacity as judge.

This is really a vital point, for his acts were of such epoch-making importance that we need to know what was the theory of the man behind the acts.⁶

Here, if we would judge aright, we must enter upon perilous ground; perilous because we must avoid attributing to Tait any but his own ideas, and yet such attribution is done only with great uncertainty. Tait's theory about things theological seems to have been loose in the sense in which one would speak of the hard and fast opinions of a Denison or a Philpott. In fact it was, we submit, the very flexibility of his ideas on certain points which made him fifty years ahead of his time. This is a rash statement, but will not be considered so after we elucidate by a comparison the difference between the old theology and the new (not Parker's brand). This difference is that in the former growth was considered impossible, whereas to-day pillars of orthodoxy admit clearly the thesis that certain parts of the inheritance once delivered are capable of retranslation. So far as the central points of Christology are concerned, Tait was in complete accord with Denison or Hook, but when it came to points not of essential importance, he was prepared for changes.⁷ He did not believe in the old theory of inspiration, though as a matter of fact, he was unwilling to accept statements which are to-day accepted by men of unimpeachable orthodoxy. Perhaps his position can be gathered best from these words of his: "What is wanted is a deeply religious liberal party, and almost all who might have formed it have in the alarm deserted. The great evil is that the liberals are deficient in religion and the religious are deficient in liberality."

⁶ It is to be noted that the judgment made such an impression that many who would otherwise have been driven from the Church remained in it, and continued to search the Scriptures with a feeling that it was still consistent with their ordination vows. Cf. Bishop Colenso's case.

⁷ "Life," Vol. I, page 322.

As near, then, as we can diagnose his position, we might say that it was approximately the same as that of the majority of the Anglican bishops to-day, who, while holding the faith without wavering, are yet sympathetic with those who waver in such matters as the historical value of, say, the Second Epistle of Saint Peter or the Book of Daniel. A leader in the English Church, in discussing those who were giving up the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, in a recent talk with the writer, seemed to imply that he could tolerate such a literary doubt among his clergy. Surely such a belief, if as much as whispered in 1861, would have shocked the world far more than the statements in "Essays and Reviews."⁸ It is interesting to note in connection with this point that Westcott was very anxious to have Hort and Lightfoot join him in a volume, not as a reply to "Essays and Reviews," but as stating what they thought to be the truth.⁹ Westcott writes thus to Hort, in 1861, expressing his opinion upon the matter: "I think it is needful to show that there is a mean between 'Essays and Reviews' and traditionalism;" or again, in a later letter: "Just now I think we might find many ready to welcome the true mean between the inexorable logic of Westminster and the skeptical dogmatism of orthodoxy." This position of the young and growing teacher of the New Testament at Cambridge is of especial interest, because it seems to show the exact frame of mind in which Tait found himself. We find in this a valuable evolutionary link between the unspoken liberalism of a Bishop in 1861 and the outspoken liberalism of one destined to become a Bishop in 1890. Indeed, in the young Westcott we see the influence of Tait instilling a belief which would dominate, when Westcott should himself reach the Episcopate.

On the whole, therefore, it seems fair to say that, compared to almost all of the other bishops of that date, Tait was tolerant of doubt as to the value of many inheritances from the past.

⁸ We wish to be understood as confining our reference to passages dealing with Old Testament criticism.

⁹ A volume actually entitled, "A Reply to Essays and Reviews," was published in 1862 with a preface by Wilberforce, and essays upon the same subjects by such men as Christopher Wordsworth, Goulburn, and others.

And yet, rightly to estimate his position, we must bear in mind that he was not what a man of to-day would call a *broad* churchman. Unfortunately the name has been polluted, and now means aggressive denial of commonly accepted facts; whereas it ought to mean sympathy with the opposite point of view. Wilson and Baden-Powell were the progenitors of those whom the world now calls broad. Tait was the true broad churchman, the true founder of that attitude of "quietness and confidence" which hesitates to condemn a man just because he oversteps here and there the boundary line of mediæval definitions.

In order to show more clearly the real breadth of our hero, let us look at his action in the next excitement which stirred the Anglican communion — the Colenso affair. I shall assume that the reader knows the principal incidents in the story: how the irascible Bishop Gray of Cape Town endeavored to excommunicate the erratic Bishop of Natal because of the latter's eccentric criticisms upon the enumerations of the Old Testament. Colenso's entire criticism of the Old Testament can be well summed up in the words: "he cannot believe in a bad sum and false arithmetical statements." The controversy between the two South African bishops speedily reached England, and the joint Anglican Episcopate would have summarily inhibited Colenso from ever officiating in England had not Tait once again come to the front and counseled waiting to see whether these things were of God or of man. His action in this matter seems to have been the result as much of advanced views as of an abstract sense of justice, and once again he stands up, almost alone, in defense, not of Colenso's book, but of Colenso himself.

Here the historian must leave the highway of documents and burrow down into the byways of the personal equation, in order to estimate the real meaning of Tait's defense of Colenso. Once again we feel free to assume that he was a forerunner of those who are able now to see such speculations as those of Colenso's without perturbation or disquietude. Perhaps the best way to get at the real meaning is by way of contrast. If Tait had felt within his heart that the errors of Colenso were such that they cut him off from all communion with Christ, then it is inconceivable that he should have acted with the persistent caution

and courtesy that he showed. Take this passage from a letter of Bishop Colenso's: "You will see that the Bishop of London does not act with the other bishops. They, headed by the Bishop of Oxford, have cut me dead, but I met him in Pall Mall a few days ago where he was walking arm in arm with another bishop, and I was going to pass him with a salutation. But he made a point of shaking me heartily by the hand and stopping to ask me some friendly questions, the other standing mute all the while;" or, writing to Lyell,¹⁰ he says, in reference to a talk that he (Colenso) had just had with Tait, that "he [Tait] then spoke of your book and seemed to think that it was quite possible to hold both it and the Biblical story as true in some sense."

All in all, then, we do not hesitate to say that deeply as the Bishop of London disagreed with Colenso as a critic, yet, none the less, in his attitude throughout the affair he exhibited marked caution and extraordinary liberality. We cannot go further into the contentions and clamors of the Colenso affair. We have given it this passing notice, however, in order to strengthen the conclusion which we draw from Tait's attitude in the "Essays and Reviews" affair: that he was an apostle and pioneer in the school of quietness and confidence.

We can best exhibit further Tait's toleration by telling of his actions in regard to that ever present intoxicant of the English Church, the ritual question. Tait was no one-sided sympathizer with the critics. He was equally the friend and protector of men of the Mackonochie stamp. For his was the true broad churchmanship — a term patient of many translations and submitted to numerous and vicious misusages. For example, we do not mean by breadth, *passivity*, such as that exemplified in Sumner — that Apollo of the mid-Victorian Episcopate may not have been the weak man that Wilberforce and many others thought him to be, but he was an unaggressive man. Nor do we mean by breadth, *fogginess*. That was a keen remark of Liddon's, when he said in reference to Stanley, that the mists and fogs

¹⁰ Lyell's work on the "Antiquity of Man," arguing that man has inhabited the earth for a period considerably longer than the most adroit manipulation of Biblical criticism would permit, had appeared just at the moment.

which poured from out the windows of the Westminster Deanery quite prevented one from locating the position of the Dean. By "breadth," we do not mean any such shrouding mists of uncertainty; no man can attribute any such fogginess to Tait. While we admit that he did not know where he stood on certain points, yet he never allowed his uncertainty upon them to muddle his mind when upon the larger facts of Christianity. Nor again, do we mean by "breadth," *extremity*. The writer was once present at a discussion between a prominent churchman and one of the leaders of the, falsely, so-called Broad party. As the discussion waxed warm and the animus of the disputants became more and more visible, the High Churchman called his antagonist to a halt by saying: "Tell me what is the ultimate object of you Broad Churchmen?" To which the pseudo-Broad Churchman replied: "To drive the Catholic party out of the Church." Such partisanship is the most stultifying and stupefying nonsense that could come from the lips of any Boeotian who had the effrontery to call himself "Broad."

Having shown what we did not mean by breadth, let us revert to Tait as the exemplar of what we do mean by that term. He was wholesomely in sympathy with those who found pleasure and profit in the swinging of incense or in the complexity of the clothes they wore. An excellent case in point is his glad willingness to consecrate St. Albans, Holborn. Loud were the howls of the extreme Protestants against this official recognition of a parish wherein, according to accusations, "auricular confession, prayers for the dead, absolution, invocation of the Virgin, extreme unction, corporal presence," were taught. The kindly communication which passed between the Bishop and Mackonochie, the irritating but earnest incumbent, reveal a mutual understanding quite remarkable. Or again, to take another case, the disputes at St. Matthias at Stoke-Newington, "place the Bishop before us in an altogether charming light."¹¹ Brett, the polemical "Catholic," writes of the Bishop: "I feel great respect for him in the many great efforts which he displays in advancing the cause of the Church, and also for his acts

¹¹ Cf. "Brett's Memoirs."

of personal kindness to myself, and especially for tender sympathy in times of bitter trial." No *post mortem* blarney this, but genuine indications of the open-hearted generosity of the man.

Tait was advanced to the Archbishopric on the death of Longley, which occurred on November 12, 1868, going to Windsor to do homage on the 5th of January, 1869. This was Disraeli's last Episcopal appointment, as he tendered his resignation to the Queen on the 1st of December, 1868, and Gladstone had been immediately designated as his successor. If dates and names are able to tell their own story, the reader will have read much here between the lines. He will remember that Disraeli as a polished politician looked at such matters from the point of view of expediency; while on the contrary, as an out-and-out High Churchman, Gladstone was prone to think more about ecclesiastical solidity.¹² Therefore, he who has considered the matter will have put the two and two together and found the result to be that Tait got in by a narrow margin, as it is highly probable that Gladstone would not have appointed so bold a defender of the critics. Whether this is true or not, certain it is that "Dizzy" advanced him because he thought him the best man to hold that important position at such a troublous time. This is the heart of our argument. It is our desire to show that throughout his career he had so acted as to inspire the feeling in his contemporaries that he was *the* man to represent the Church of England at a time when the preservation of its unity depended upon the appointment of a man trusted and respected by both parties.

The conditions which demanded such a man were of such importance and interest that it is well worth our while to examine with considerable minuteness that "sea of trouble," for the crossing of which Disraeli deemed Tait an efficient pilot. Incidentally we might inject a remark that all of Wilberforce's friends were keenly anxious that he should be advanced to Canterbury; which fact we gather from the amount of wire-pulling for that purpose that was perpetrated at the time. It is probable that Wilberforce himself did not expect the appointment, though

¹² Cf. Gladstone's Life for the care he gave to this matter.

one is led to believe that he might have received it if Gladstone had been Premier.

But to return to the sea of trouble. Between 1860 and 1880 there rolled up a tidal wave of rationalism unprecedented in its outspokenness in the history of thought. It has been remarked by a recent rationalistic writer that orthodoxy was threatened far more at that time by literature than by science. Without doubt this is true, for poetry and imaginative prose extend their influence and are listened to in thousands of places which the repellent rigidities of science never reach; and writings of the imaginative kind tend by their very charm to persuade the common folk more than do the syllogistic *ex cathedras* of the erudite. All of which being so, a period when literature suddenly begins to teem with suggestions and statements of an unorthodox type is one in which deep questions are sure to pervade the whole thinking populace. Witness the influences to which the British public was subjected from this quarter. Tennyson and Browning were then in the ascendant. Custom has in late years led us to look upon these two seers of the nineteenth century as pillars of the faith, and custom has not been a blind leader. Without doubt, Godseekers will for centuries fall back on "In Memoriam" and "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and to many others of the poems of these two philosophers. Without doubt, Tennyson and Browning were pillars of the faith — but that is 1900 speech. Could we have said the same thing in 1865? I doubt it, for if one compares them with the sweet singers who preceded them as Christian apologists; if one compares their poems with those who before them had definitely defended religious beliefs, there will be seen to be this difference: Unquestionable acceptance of all the articles of belief is the keynote of the earlier writers, while intrepid questioning of the validity of their claims is the chief note of the latter. For example, contrast Tennyson and Browning with Herbert and Keble. The keynote of this later school would seem to be sounded in these words of Tennyson:

The faith, the vigor, bound to dwell,
On doubt that drives the coward back,
And keen through wordy snares to track,
Suggestion to her inmost cell,

In other words, Tennyson and Browning represented the new spirit of higher criticism, the unimpeded investigation of all things behind the veil of the Holy of Holies. It was this very spirit against which the conservatives fought in 1850. We believe that these two great representatives of British poetry did greatly influence the English people in carrying them away from the old ideas of subserviency and forcing them to sound each for himself the depths of the infinite.

But they were the large landmarks and there are the many lesser lights of an equally revolutionary tendency. Swinburne, for example, throughout his writings breathes contempt for the idea of a personal God and openly defies the religious conception of the day in his "Songs Before Sunrise," published in 1870. Matthew Arnold was no lover of obscurantism and he was at his prime at this moment. It is tremendously significant of the uncertainty and changefulness of the time that he should have written to Temple in October, 1869, saying, "The times, in spite of all people say, are good and will be better. In the seventeenth century I should certainly have been in orders, and I think if I were a young man now I would take them." The peculiar significance of this remark is unmistakable. It showed that a light had at last appeared on the horizon for those tired seekers after truth; a light which told them that the times were past wherein *suppressio veri* was to be the watchword. That so powerful an exemplar of the liberal tendency in literature should have thought it possible for himself to take orders is a trenchant sign of the pregnancy and possibilities of the moment. Apparently Arnold could read the signs aright, and foresaw a condition when it would be possible for a man like his friend Temple to be Archbishop. Rossetti, by temperament a mystic and æsthetic, and therefore little prone to skepticism, was none the less, we learn from his memoirs, "never confirmed; professing no religious faith; and practising no regular religious observances." Of Morris, equally influential, if not so brilliant, we can say what we have of others: he was a bewildering prophet in a bewildered world.

We believe that we have said enough to illustrate our argument that the literary tendency had changed since the days gone

by, and was fast approaching the out-and-out agnosticism that we hear openly taught by the poetasters of to-day.¹³ To reinforce these writers we find at this time that the periodicals were downright in their demands for a change in religious conditions. Perhaps all did not blurt it out so bluntly as did John Morley, then editor of the *Fortnightly*, who said in the issue of October, 1870, that the object of his fellow laborers was "to disband that sinister clerical army of twenty-five thousand men in masks." And yet the general policy of that paper, as well as of the *Westminster*, *Fraser's* (under J. A. Froude), and the *Cornhill* (in which "Literature and Dogma" first appeared), was thoroughly adverse to any such creed as that of Wilberforce, or even Stanley's. It is further of interest to note that it was in the year 1869 that J. R. Green abandoned his orders, preferring retirement in the deserts of unbelief to fame in the courts of the Church and it was some two years earlier that Leslie Stephen had renounced the Church to become an apostle of free-thinking.

When we turn to the scientific world we find that reticence had just given way to roughness, and the populace were no longer to be treated to a milk diet by the doctors of biology and chemistry. Benn devotes a whole chapter to the outbursts of rationalism in 1874. To them we need not give especial attention, other than to ask the reader to parallel the facts which we have just been enumerating with the facts of the development of science between 1860 and 1880.¹⁴

Lastly, to pile Pelion on Ossa, we should tell of the thickening difficulties in 1869 in things ecclesiastical. The political movement that overshadowed all others at that moment was the Irish Church disestablishment, which Gladstone made the opening act of his first tenure of the Premiership. The whole of Tait's first year in the Primacy was absorbed in the excitement

¹³ It is interesting in this connection to compare the novelists of the period of whom perhaps the most typical expression is found in Mrs. Ward's "Robert Elsmere."

¹⁴ It is to be remembered that 1878 is often spoken of as the culminating moment of the materialistic movement. This would put our year 1869 very near the crest of the wave.

of this affair. As a smaller weather vane, the act passed in this year (1869) admitting atheists as witnesses into the law courts, tells its own story. In the strictly ecclesiastical world two acts of antithetical tendencies marked this moment, acts heavy with forebodings of the reality of the breach between Ultramontanism and liberalism. The one, the Vatican Council of 1870, with its reactionary tendency; the other, the nomination in October, 1869, of Temple to the See of Exeter. This last mentioned act can be said to mark (if we can ever posit valid landmarks in history) the moment when the Anglican Church crossed its Rubicon and officially set the seal of its approval on higher criticism. Perhaps the most significant thing about this whole affair was that it was Wilberforce's dear friend and brother High Churchman, Gladstone, who made this appointment. Had the appointment come from Palmerston, a man of no ecclesiastical conviction, there is no telling the end of trouble which it would have created. But to have it come from Gladstone, assured acquiescence from the first. The protests which poured in against this appointment lost most of their power because of the well known orthodoxy of the appointer.

To return to Tait. If facts have any significance, the reader will now realize the tenderness and sensitiveness of the Church in 1869, the year when Tait came to Canterbury. Times they were so critical that none but a man of peculiar and most unusual characteristics could hold together the opposing parties within the Church, and keep the Church itself guarded against the attacks from without. If we have been successful thus far, it should be evident that he was a man of the type necessary for this contingency. Of his acts as Primate we do not think it necessary to speak. The characteristics of the man should suggest that he was more of a figurehead than a leader, and it has been the desire of the writer from the first to exhibit his hero, not as a General, but rather as a pontoon of such peculiar structure that over it could pass the army of those who left the old order behind and entered in upon the new. The fact finally to be emphasized is that despite the difficulties of the moment, the divisions within and the attacks from without; despite the general uncertainty and the un-

stable equilibrium; despite all these untoward circumstances that existed throughout his Primacy, at the end of it we find the Church stronger than she had been at the commencement of it.

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